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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 003058

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARPI, NEA/PPD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KPAQ](#) [PREL](#) [KU](#)

SUBJECT: SPECIAL MEDIA REACTION: LONDON TERROR ATTACKS

¶1. Summary: Local commentators aired widely divergent reactions to the London terror attacks. Some called for fighting terror by re-examining Islam and Arab culture to root out the causes, and condemning Bin Laden and his cohorts on religious grounds. Others implicitly blamed the attacks on the U.S. and its policies, particularly in Israel and Palestine. One commentator explicitly blamed the terror on a "Zionist organization." Writing in pro-government daily Al-Qabas, Saud Samaka wrote, "Winning the war on terrorism will not be achieved only through arms and weapons. We must lift the injustices in the world before we fight the means of terrorism." End Summary.

¶2. Writing in pro-government daily Al-Anba on July 9, Salah Al-Sayer wrote: "It is true that those terrorists are heartless criminals, and that they do not represent the core of [Islam] or its tolerant beliefs. But at the end they remain Muslims, and Islam forbids calling Muslims atheists. Our societies must admit this sour fact. Let us not stray away from facts and waste time on matters that could make fighting terrorism an impossible mission. Muslims today have an obligation to serve their religion by assessing the areas of weakness, and the reasons in our culture that gave birth to these groups. Restoring our image through the media after every terrorist operation is no longer a useful counter-strategy."

¶3. Writing in Al-Anba on July 9, Sami Al-Nesf, media advisor to the Prime Minister, wrote: "The search for Bin Laden and bringing him to justice, or even killing him, is no longer just the responsibility of the United States, or the European countries. These countries are not the prime victims of his crimes against humanity and innocent citizens. There is a historic responsibility upon Arabs and Muslims to find Bin Laden and put an end to his crimes. After all it was them (Arabs and Muslims) that harbored him, helped him grow and then escape. We look forward to seeing a clear Fatwa [Religious Decree] that condemns his bloodshed, and unlawful crimes. Only then would the entire world believe that we condemn his acts and abhor his repulsive crimes."

¶4. Writing in independent daily Al-Watan on July 9, Dr. Ayed Al-Manna, advisor to the Kuwait Journalist's Association, wrote: "Who would benefit from spreading terror and the fear of death among public transportation commuters? The public transportation system is not the army of an aggressor, and it is not a military target. Arabs and Muslims are going to be the primary suspect in this incident and any similar attacks, until we can prove otherwise. However, why do we accept the theory that Arab or Muslim organizations were behind the planning and execution of these attacks? Why not consider the possibility that some Zionist organization was behind these attacks? Everything is possible. It might be the Al-Qaeda Organization in Europe that claimed responsibility for the attack. But could this not be an Arabic name for a Zionist organization? The other scenario is if these terrorists were Arab agents [defectors] working for the enemy against their countries. Those would be a worse enemy than the enemy we face."

¶5. Writing in Al-Watan on July 9, Kuwait University Professor of Political Science Dr. Abdullah Al-Shayji wrote: "The war in Iraq has led to the mobilization of Islamist jihadis [holy war warriors] who are capable of shaking the peace and stability of other countries. Terrorist missions in 2003 were 175 operations. In 2004 the number jumped to 655. All these operations have been executed in the name of Islam, when Islam has nothing to do with their claims. We have to admit that traditional warfare has failed in defeating terrorism, because terrorism has no home or identity. It has no address or shape. Fighting terrorism must be done through fighting its ideology. If the U.S. and its allies continue to undermine this fact, and keep on taking the side of international aggressors, and adopting double standard policies, we are doomed to fail in our fight against terrorism."

¶6. Writing in pro-government daily Al-Qabas on July 9, Saud Samaka wrote: "Once again terrorism has shown its ugly face in the heart of England's capital. Terrorism once again is proving that it has no religion, and it does

not distinguish between friends and foes. Four years have passed since the world declared a universal war against this evil. Yet no victory has been achieved through traditional warfare led by the U.S. and its allies. There are facts that the U.S. and the whole world are ignoring. The Palestinian issue: this is a prime reason of every terrorist act. State terrorism was born when the world ignored the Palestinians' struggle.. The Middle East region continues to be ignored. Terrorism has made of this region a battlefield for its operations. Winning the war on terrorism will not be achieved only through arms and weapons. We must lift the injustices in the world before we fight the means of terrorism."

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